# National Tribune.

"To care for him who has borne the battle, and for his widow and orphans."





ESTABLISHED 1877—NEW SERIES. WASHINGTON, D. C., THURSDAY, MAY 11, 1899. VOL. XVIII—NO. 31—WHOLE NO. 926.

## A Boy Lieutenant in a Black Regiment.

By CAPT. FRED S. BOWLEY,
First Lieutenant, 30th U. S. C. T.

SYNOPSIS.

The author, a cadet at the Highland Military Academy, attends a reception given at Worcester, Mass., in honor of returned veterans, and is so impressed with the heroism of a Color-Sergeant of the 21st Mass., that he decides to offer his services. At this time the colored volunteers were being organized. He applies for examination as Second Lieutenant, but before the Examining Board, at Washington, passes creditably as First Lieutenant. He is commissioned First Lieutenant in the 30th U. S. C. T., and on May 4, 1864, joins his regiment at Manassas Junction, where he is assigned to Co. H. That evening orders are received to break camp, and the march to the front begins. The regiment is present at the battle of the Wilderness, but takes no active part in the fighting.

Thousands of fresh troops, coming by way of Fredericksburg, were on their way to the front. Most of them were heavy artillerymen equipped as infantry, from the fortifications around Washington. The men were fat, and their faces were red and flushed, and the perspiration fairly rolled off of them. No wonder they sweated; every man had a knapsack as big as a hardtack box. It did not take them long to get rid of their superfluous baggage, and the roads were lined with woolen blankets, overcoats, extra clothing, books, playing-cards, and all the knick-knacks that a soldier accumulates in camp.

Many of our men exchanged their mud-soaked clothing for new, clean articles picked up by the roadside. The first death in the company occurred here. A stout young fellow, attacked by cramps, lay down crying, "Oh, Lordy, I'se got misery in my heart; I'se agwine ter die, I'se agwine ter die." The Surgeon did his best, but the next morning the man was dead.

We buried him in a shallow grave beside the road, with a piece of hardtack box for a headboard.

The men had received rations the day previous; and the Surgeon told me that, without doubt, the man had killed himself by eating all his ration of sugar at once, and then stuffing himself with fried fat salt pork.

A prayer meeting in another regiment attracted me that evening. Grouped under the great pine trees, the scene lighted up by fires of pine knots, the men, all wearing their accouterments, gathered. Every black face was sober and reverent. The leader "lined off" the words of the hymn, and all sang the words together. The voices rose sweet and mellow. Then came prayers and exhortations. The words were those of ignorant men, but there was in them a pathos which I have never heard equalled.

The cannon were roaring at Spottsylvania, and the dropping sound of musketry was heard all the time. One powerful black soldier prayed, "Oh, Lord Jesus, you knows we's ready an' willin' to die for de flag; dat's what we'se hyah foh; but, O, Lord, if we falls, comfort de lubbed ones at home."

A responsive "Amen" came from all the hearers; and I turned away with tears in my eyes, for I too was thinking of home, and the black soldier had spoken my unuttered prayer.

I had now been a soldier a week. My "initiation" was progressing rapidly.

THE BUTTERFLIES.

Accompanying the Fourth Division of the Ninth Corps were two cavalry regiments, the 3d Ohio, a small veteran regiment, and the 3d N. J., better known as the "Butterflies," so-called on account of their fantastic uniforms. The jackets and caps of the privates were perfect bouquets of yellow braiding and knots, while a commissioned officer "Butterfly," seen in the sunlight, was a glittering, gorgeous spectacle of gold braid and trimmings. Nearly every Division Headquarters had one or more "Butterflies" attached to it as Orderlies. No doubt, at home, on their own soil, the Jersey men were great "swells," and produced a profound impression, but when they arrived at the front the old vets made their lives miserable. Whenever one of them appeared the cry arose: "Butterfly! butterfly! Catch him and put him in a canteen!"

The "Zoo-zoos," or as they were generally called, the "Redlegs," the soldier's name for Zouave regiments, were particularly acrimonious toward the "Butterflies." Perhaps jealousy had something to do with it.

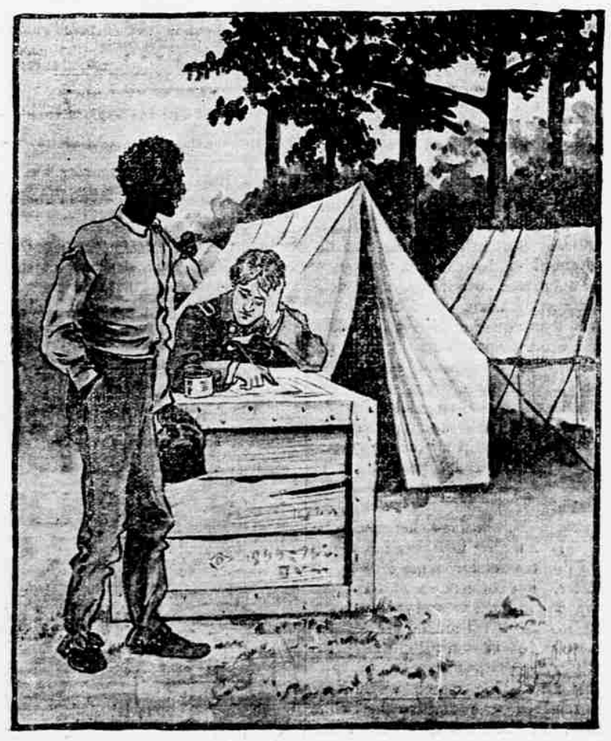
The Fourth Division was in the pine woods at the left of Spotsylvania, when, late one afternoon, the cavalry carbines began to crack at a furious rate. The 3d Ohio Cav. and the "Butterflies" had every man engaged. The enemy had developed in force, and there was a call for the infantry.

ON THE SKIRMISH-LINE.

Our regiment went off on the double-quick. I was doing my first detail as Officer of the Guard. Gathering up my sentinels, I followed the regiment on the run. When we overtook the rest, Co. B, the left flank company, was deploying as skirmishers. Maj. Leake, who was directing the movement, promptly ordered my guard to deploy with the others, and they were soon strung out five or six paces apart.

"Now just imagine you are hunting for coons, and keep your eyes open. Skirmishers, forward, guide left—March!" shouted the Major.

"'Pears like 'twas de coons doin' de huntin' dis time, yah! yah!" laughed a black soldier, as the line moved forward with alacrity.



"RECKON YO' WRITES A MIGHTY FINE LETTER, LIEUTENANT."

We passed through the woods to an open field. Across the field some 300 yards away were the Confederate cavalry skirmishers. A few bullets came whizzing our way.

Here was my chance. I would fire my first shot for the old flag and the Union. Taking a rifle, I aimed, with great deliberation, at a horseman, who appeared to be an officer, and fired. The rifle was an old Enfield. It kicked spitefully, and gave me the impression that my shoulder had been almost dislocated. And the officer? He did not notice it at all, but rode down his line perfectly unconcerned.

Our firing was soon stopped, as it was not desired to show our force. The enemy fell back into the woods out of our sight. We remained in line all night, but when daylight came there was no enemy in our front.

Our division moved towards Port Royal, crossing the railroad south of the hills of Fredericksburg. Capt. Smith pointed out to me the place where he and a few comrades had been taken prisoners, after the battle of Fredericksburg. They were doing picket-duty, and when the Union army fell back across the river they were left behind. Daylight found them with Confederates on all sides. As Capt. Smith remarked: "Four men couldn't lick or stop the whole rebel army, so they scooped us in."

GUARDING THE WAGON-TRAINS.

To our division was assigned the task of guarding the great wagon-trains that supplied the Army of the Potomac. Those who have never seen an army train, can form but a faint idea of its magnitude. These were the "fighting trains," carrying ammunition, rations, forage, and supplies only. Everything was reduced to the lowest basis. Three baggage wagons, only, were allowed to our brigade of four regiments. The brigade commander had a small "A" tent, carried on a pack-mule. All the wagons were marked with the brigade, division, and corps to which they belonged, and the articles they were intended to carry. For instance, a wagon marked, "First Brig., Fourth Div., Ninth Corps. Ammunition. E. B. Cat. Cal. .58," would indicate that that particular wagon was loaded with elongated ball cartridges, caliber .58, for the use of the brigade named. Gen. Grant, in his Memoirs, states that this great train would have filled a road from the Rapidan River to Richmond.

Each wagon was drawn by six mules, and they were driven by one driver, who rode the "nigh wheeler," and directed the movements of the team with a single rein or "jerk line." It is my honest belief that the "army mule" is a long-suffering, much-abused and badly-slandered animal. Certain it is that he filled a most important and responsible position in those war-time days, and if his heels were sometimes treacherous it was not to be wondered at, considering the abuse that he received.

To guard those great trains was a most arduous and thankless duty. We were kept almost constantly marching and manuvering to protect the wagons from the dashing Confederate cavalry, who were always hovering around the flanks and rear ready to pounce upon an unprotected train. "Going into camp," was simply forming the regiment in line-of-battle in an advantageous position and stacking the guns. The men lay behind the stacks with their accouterments on and the officers slept in front of their companies. Such was the tension on the men's nerves that I have known the whole division to spring to their feet in the middle of the night and seize their guns. The alarm might be caused by a stack of arms falling down or a sleeper crying out in his sleep, but if once the alarm started it spread instantly and almost silently along the whole line.

As nearly as human endurance made it possible we must march all day and go on picket or build roads all night. If ever the weary men were comfortably resting in a shady spot the bugle, it seemed, would be surely heard calling:

"I know you are tired and don't want to go.
But put on your knapsack and come along slow."

"Fall in!" was the order then, and away we went, plodding through the dust. "Dat ole bugle, he nebber git weary," said the men. Accompanying the army was a great herd of beef cattle, known among the soldiers, after their fashion of bestowing an odd name upon everything, as the "Bull Corps." One night, near the North Anna, we halted to allow a wagon-train and the Bull Corps to pass. The four regiments of the First Brigade went into the pine woods to the left of the road, stacked their arms and lay down to rest. The Second Brigade did the same on the opposite side of the road. All went well until the Bull Corps had nearly passed, when a steer broke from the herd and ran through a line of stacked muskets, overturning some and discharging one. A few men lying near by woke in a panic, grasped their muskets and fired. Immediately a scattering fire broke out along the whole line, and in another instant the Second Brigade, believing itself attacked, returned the fire.

Our regiment was the one nearest the road, and consequently we were directly between the two fires, and also under the hoofs of the frightened cattle, which were now stampeding in all directions.

We were all lying flat, and yelling "Stop that firing! Lie down, 30th!" when, by the misty moonlight, I saw a hugh steer plunging directly towards me. Preferring the chances of being shot to the certainty of being trampled upon, I arose and ran behind a big pine. Spat came a bullet, striking the tree not a foot over my head. This roused my temper. Jumping in among a group of men where some of the firing was coming from, I laid about vigorously with the flat of my sword, at the same time yelling to them to cease firing. I soon quieted that group. Meantime other officers were taking equally severe measures, and order was soon restored.

A few men had received bullet wounds in this foolish panic, but most of the casualties, it was found, came from the officers' swords.

NIGHT MARCH THROUGH BOWLING GREEN.

When the army moved to North Anna there was for a time that the Second Corps was separated from the rest of the army, and was in a most critical position. The troops were rushed to close the gap, and about 9 o'clock one evening, our division passed through the village of Bowling Green. Someone had set fire to the Court-house, and when we passed the village street was lighted up by the burning building. Our men were in high spirits. A rumor prevailed that Gen. Lee with his Confederate army were in full retreat, and that Gen. Grant was racing him to Richmond.

The troops passed through, singing "John Brown's Body Lies Buried in the Ground," and the frightened women and children whom I saw peeping from the windows must surely have thought that "his soul was marching on," when nearly 5,000 negro soldiers passed, each one singing and yelling at the top of his voice.

We camped about six miles south of Bowling Green at a station called "Polecat."

I had just finished writing a letter, using an empty hardtack-box as a desk, when big Bob Bowen stepped up near me, stood at "attention," and taking off his cap stood twisting it in his hands.

Bob was a powerful young fellow of 20, six feet high, splendidly built, with great ox-like eyes and a clear, wine-black complexion of the kind known among the men as "right-bright."

"Well, what is it, Bob?" I asked.

"Reckon yo' writes a mighty fine letter, Lieutenant," said Bob interrogatively.

"What makes you think so?" I asked, somewhat amused.

"Pears dat-a-way toe me, sah. 'Spects yo's bin writin' toe yoah young lady, sah?" replied Bob.

"Yes," I said, "I've been writing to a young lady," and desiring to help him out of his embarrassment, for the big beads of perspiration were rolling down his face, "I think that you want me to write a letter for you to your young lady. Isn't that it?"

"Dat's it, 'zackly," said Bob. "All right Bob," I said, "I'll fix up that letter for you right now. Where is it going, and who is the young lady?"

"Young lady's named Tilley, sah; lib ober on a Eastern Sho', sah; b'longs toe ole Marse Bowen, sah, same ole Marse Bowen dat own me, sah. He own a heap ob people, and a right smart big place near Chestertown, sah," said Bob, fairly gasping for breath, as all this information rolled off at once.

"Well," I asked, "can Miss Tilley read and write? and what is her other name, Tilley—what?"

"Nebber had no oder name, dat I knows ob; just b'longs to ole Marse; don't reckon she knows 'zed' from 'crowsfut,' no mo'n I does," answered Bob, whose ideas of the alphabet were somewhat vague.

"But who will read her letter for her?" I inquired, wishing to know into whose hands the epistle would fall.

"Reckon she'll git Miss Julia, de young Missis, to read it, sah. Yo' see, sah, Tilley's house gal—Miss Julie's own sarbent; no field han' 'bout her. Mighty peart gal, dat Tilley," answered Bob proudly.

"All right, Bob, I think I understand; now, we'll date this letter—

'Polecat, May,'——

"Hol' on dar, Lieutenant, hol' on; foh de lau's sake, doan write dat-a-way. Miss Julia nebber stop laughin' at Tilley; dat 'Polecat' spile de letter suah," interrupted Bob anxiously.

"How will we date it, then?" I asked. "We always put a date on a letter."

"Dog my cat if I knows," answered Bob despondently.

"Let's see; how will this do? Camp 30th U. S. Col. Inf., May,"——

"Dat a heap better," said Bob, much relieved.

Then I began the letter, and Bob dictated and I arranged his crude ideas. He told the girl how he thought of her day and night; how, when the regiment was in line-of-battle its colors blew around and touched his cheek; which was true, for Co. H was the sixth in line, and the colors and color-guard stood between the fifth and sixth companies. How he tried to do his duty, and if he died he would die by the side of the old flag. He told her, furthermore, that he had not made the acquaintance of any colored ladies since he had left home, and that he didn't want to hear of any of the young fellows from the other plantations calling around to see her. Altogether, love, patriotism, and admonition were pretty well mixed in Bob's letter. The epistle was finished, and I addressed a personal postscript, giving a good account of Bob's conduct. It was duly sealed, directed, and indorsed "Soldier's letter," for stamps were scarce.

While I was writing it the men gathered in groups a little way off, and I soon had another applicant, Perry Gibson. Perry was a married man, and owned a little farm in Anne Arundel County, Md.

"How many children have you, Perry?" I asked.

"Nine, sah; all as black as crows; no milk and 'lasses ones in dat fam'bly," was the proud response.

From this time forth I had plenty of letter writing to attend to. The men were a little afraid of the Captain, and the Second Lieutenant made fun of them, and the negroes were as sensitive to ridicule as most white persons are. When the answer came, the letters were brought to me to be read, and with a delicacy that I never expected from them, the men always remained out of earshot while a comrade's letter was being read to him. The answer to Bob's letter brought to me a very pleasant note from Miss Julia, and I remember that the answer to Perry's letter contained the information that the "old blue sow had nine pigs; the children is

(Continued on second page.)

## Pen Pictures of Guerrilla Life in Cuba

By THOMAS C. ESTERMAN.



SYNOPSIS.

The author, an American gun-maker, in business in Manzanillo, being fond of adventurous experiences, was easily persuaded to accompany one of the Cuban officers to a camp in the Eastern province to repair an outfit of Mauser rifles, and he was by no means averse to sharing for awhile the fortunes of the Cuban patriots. Guisa, a small mountain town, is burned, and many of its inhabitants massacred by a band of outlaws nominally attached to the Cuban cause. The affair arouses intense indignation, and a large force of Spanish troops are sent against the outlaws, who, after a hard fight, are driven from their mountain fastnesses. A Spanish doctor, Leon Escobedo, and his son, during the battle, become separated from their command, and are brought into the Cuban camp, where they remain more as guests than prisoners. Information reaches camp that a number of mules, formerly the property of the outlaws, are grazing on the mountain, and the meat supply being short, the Cubans plan to capture them. The author accompanies the party.

Poor Pancho seemed to have rather overdone things in trying to approach the old mare by stealth. Creeping up in the high grass, he had nearly reached the tethering-plug, when one of the mules caught sight of him unawares, and bolted with a snort that sent the whole troop tearing up the glen. In their first fright they might have raced away beyond recovery, but the little lad with great presence of mind had slowly risen and was now standing still, feeding the mare from his cargo of corn.

That reassured the stampeders, and when the youngster quietly withdrew, they ventured to return. A few hung back and alarmed the troop every time our messenger attempted to display his bait at close range. His retreat as invariably allayed their fright; they would sneak back to explore the ground for scattered corn, and so on till Lieut. Salinez lost patience.

A CHANGE OF PROGRAM.

"Run up there, Erny, and tell your brother to try and move the mare a little piece this way," he whispered; "if they keep following her, I know a different plan. There must be a canyon or rocky gulch somewhere near here," he explained, when the courier was gone, "and if they won't let us come near them in open ground we must bring them to terms in some other way."

"There's more than one good gulch less than a mile from here," said the old squatter"—one steep cleft about 500 yards down this *rambla*"—pointing to a bushy glen that appeared to slope rather abruptly towards the Valley of the Rio Hondo. The entire mountain chain consisted, indeed, of limestone formations, and rivulets, not more than a yard wide, had hollowed out deep defiles of their own.

Erny had delivered his message, and the white mare presently disappeared.

"Blame the luck! I hope they will not take her too far," muttered the Lieutenant; "if those panicky things get a glimpse of our moss-troopers we won't see them any more this week."

But Charley Chino's boys knew what they were about. Pancho had taken care not to move her out of sight. With the exception of a few loiterers the entire *mulada* soon entered the woods, and a few minutes after Erny returned to report the success of the experiment.

"Go again, Pet, and tell him to take her another hundred yards south, straight toward the sun," said the Lieutenant, "and leave her there till we get things ready. Tell him to scatter corn enough to make it worth their while to hang around a quarter of an hour."

"Are you going to stopper up the gulch?" asked the old squatter.

"Yes; let's all help together, and we can pitch in brushwood and things in a few minutes, without much noise. Serg't Mariel's men will be enough to watch our drove till we are done."

SETTING A TRAP.

The glen narrowed and became steeper and rockier till the grassy slopes turned into cliffs, less than 20 yards apart, and here and there approaching within a cat's jump from ledge to ledge. At one of these points we decided to construct our barricade. Sassafras, manzanillas, pine bushes and other frangible shrubs flew down by armfuls, and in less than half an hour the obstruction was pronounced mule-proof.

The barricaders fell back, or crouched flat in the weeds above the slopes of the defile, but could hardly suppress a cheer when Erny Chino led the white mare slowly down the glen, followed by the entire troop of mules.

It was decided to bring up the men under Mariel before attempting to capture the mules, and old Pacheco was directed to fetch them. A low cackle, like the whinny of a horse, made our messenger stop and scrutinize the east-side thicket before he had slipped out of sight of our ambush. Serg't Mariel had kept his eyes open and diagnosed the change of program as soon as he saw the boys move the mare.

"There they are, now," whispered Lieut. Estevan. "Good for old Mariel! I was getting a little nervous about our scheme. Those pets down there might get fidgety and skip as soon as they are done with our corn. Let's close up on them from below, before they play us tricks."

Two-thirds of our force took post in the defile, just out of sight of our drove, while the rest were distributed along the upper edge of the declivity, ready to rally on any risky point. And in spite of all other precautions our day's labor would have been lost if the detachment at the head of the side gulch had been beyond reach of instant reinforcements.

IN THE TOILS.

The moment the trapped quadrupeds caught a glimpse of the advancing defile-guard they seemed to realize their peril, and made a simultaneous dash for the point where the bulwark of steep cliffs was broken by a cleft with a bottom-stratum of sand and loose gravel. Under their pawing hoofs the steep slope was tramped into terraces, rear ranks plunged over backsliders, and one big piebald came so near getting away that he was headed off only by a stunning whack that sent him reeling back into the pit of the gulch. Half a dozen others were roped before they gained the upper edge of the slope, but only by the catlike activity of the Mariel men, who had scrambled up the cliffs without waiting for orders and took the blockade-breakers in flank at the very brink of a natural terrace that would have opened a gate of escape to the south.

The rest of the troop, weaklings and cripples, most of them, huddled about the mare and pawed each other in the struggle. From three to four men had laid hold of each dragging lariat, and some of our captives tumbled back into the gulch. It was 15 minutes before the refugees could be separated and pulled out, one by one, to be bridled and *bagged*—i. e., have their heads muffled with gunny-bags.

That simple arrangement obviated more trouble than horse-wizard Rarey could have saved us with all his tricks. The wildest horse, mule or zebra will hesitate to rush blindfold into unknown dangers, and on finding that the novel headgear cannot be stripped off between his knees, will generally come to a dead stop, or submit to a guide and march forth with a peculiar stalking, hesitating gait.

It doesn't take our Spanish-American neighbors long to size up a beast of burden, and before we got back to the river-road the mule conductor had ascertained that four of our captives could be saddled. Master Erny had picked one that could dispense with a gunny-bag hood, but just as he had rigged up some substitute for a pair of stirrups, one of the Bernal troopers pushed him aside and jumped in the saddle.

"What's the matter, Mauricio?" asked his Sergeant; "are you getting lame, to knock out a kid not bigger than your arm?"

"Just going to try her," the trooper called back, as he set his steed a-trotting, and without heeding the protest then ambled a stretch ahead and every now and then took a gallop into a side-trail.

WINGED RENEGADE.

"Hallo! there goes a rooster," cried Pacheco, as an unmistakable barnyard cock rose from a wayside thicket and sailed over a copse of pine bushes on our left; "how those rascals learn flying when they have to hustle for themselves!"

"Do they breed in the jungle, too?" I inquired.

"Yes; I've found eggs," said the old pot-hunter; "there's hundreds and thousands of them that lost their old homes in the war, and had to take what luck there was in the chaparral. A good many get nabbed by the wildcats, but many, too, find hiding-places to suit themselves, though they are too smart to crow over it."

"They lose their voice, you mean?"

"Not altogether; but they don't make more noise than they can help. Only early in the morning the temptation gets too much for them, and you can hear them crow in good regulation style from the center of some jungle where a self-respecting pig wouldn't try to break through."

"Hallo, Mariel, where's that Bernal fellow?" asked Lieut. Salinez, when our cavalcade halted at the edge of the river-willows; "only 10 mules here, now; where's Erny's?"

"Here are my boys, sir," said the old squatter, "but"——

The Sergeant of the Bernaleros put both his hands to his mouth and turned towards the hill-forest. "Oh, Mauricio!" he bawled again and again, in a voice that could be plainly heard for a mile around.

"That fellow skipped, it seems," said Corp'l Marquez.

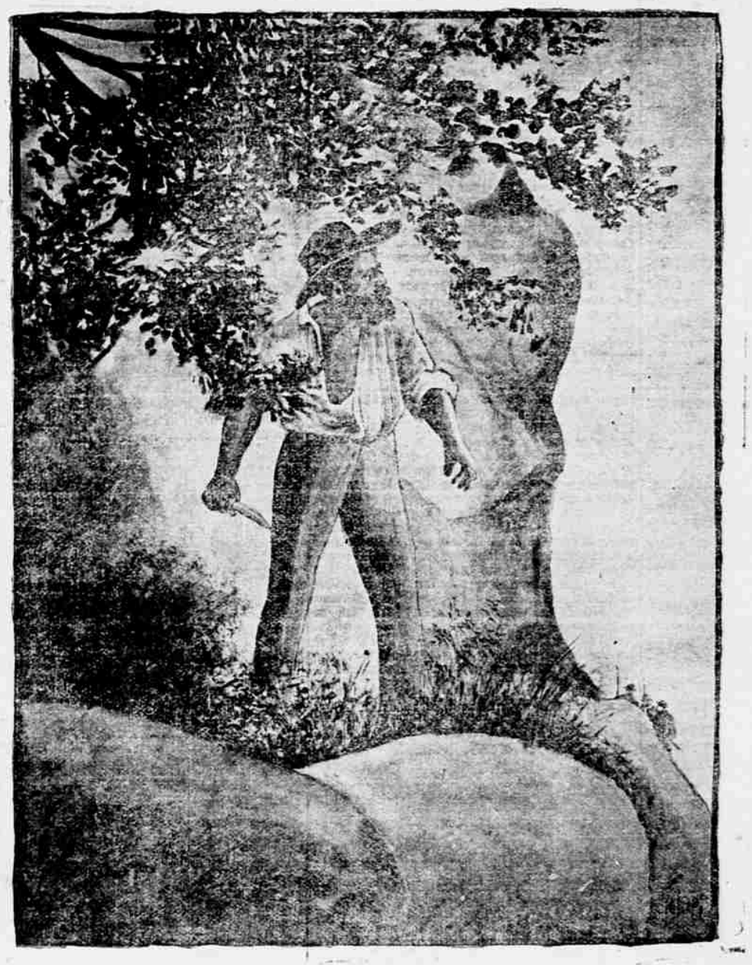
"Then, by todos santos, I'm going to get the mule, anyhow," said the old Sergeant, grabbing his rifle, and starting up the hill-trail.

"Here, stop, cabo," sang out Lieutenant Salinez, but had to repeat his order in a rather emphatic manner before the old trooper could be induced to return. "Let him go; I tell you we don't want to be bothered with any more prisoners."

"I'd make him take supper en el infierno if I had got in range of him," said the old Sergeant grimly.

"What's the matter with him; seemed a sort of contrary chap, all along, didn't he?"

"Yes; a fellow with a temper like a bob-tailed wildcat," said the Sergeant; "it would be a good riddance if he hadn't taken the best mule along. He



"BULLET AFTER BULLET WHIZZED PAST HIS HEAD."